

MINUTES
GREEN BAY HOUSING AUTHORITY
Thursday, January 16, 2014, 10:30 a.m.
1424 Admiral Court, Second Floor Reading Room
Green Bay, WI 54303

MEMBERS PRESENT: W. VandeCastle—Vice Chair, S. Popp, B. Goodlet, A. LaHaie, and B. Hansen.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: R. Hallet, S. Schmutzer, N. Aderholdt, and C. Androsky

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approval of the December 19, 2013, minutes of the Green Bay Housing Authority.

A motion was made by A. LaHaie and seconded by S. Popp to approve meeting minutes of December 19, 2013 as presented. Motion carried.

R. Hallet introduced the new Authority Commissioner. Brad Hansen is an engineer with Berners-Schober. The Authority made introductions and welcomed the newest Commissioner.

COMMUNICATIONS:

2. Letters from Department of Housing and Urban Development dated October 30, 2013 and December 11, 2013 regarding REAC inspection appeal results.

R. Hallet explained that the previous summer REAC inspections had been conducted on both Mason Manor and the Scattered Sites. The results had been appealed; these letters are the results of those appeals. Three items had been appealed on the Mason Manor inspection, of which one was accepted. As a result, Mason Manor's REAC score had improved from 94 to 95. Several items had been appealed on Scattered Sites inspection, but only one was accepted. As a result, the Scattered Sites REAC score had improved from 76 from 86.

A motion was made by S. Popp and seconded by B. Goodlet to accept the REAC letters and place on file. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

3. Discussion and possible action regarding T-HUD bill.

R. Hallet invited C. Androsky to update the Authority on the status of the federal T-HUD bill. C. Androsky explained that the T-HUD funding was contained within the Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations Bill. Shortly the bill would be coming up for a vote. The Authority had been advised to contact their representatives and advocate for federal funding for housing programs contained within the T-HUD spending package, a component of the FY 2014 Appropriations Bill. S. Popp explained that the T-HUD bill contained funding for transportation as well as housing and urban development and the funding gets dispersed in many different directions. R. Hallet pointed out the form letters included in this month's meeting packet and gave directions as to how to access other form letters through various housing websites. R. Hallet cautioned that the Authority is not allowed to lobby legislation and thus recommended against a letter on GBHA letterhead from the Authority as a whole or staff time being spent on such efforts, as it may be misperceived as lobbying.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Discussion and possible action on election of officers.

W. VandeCastle explained that due to recent restructuring, the Authority was currently without a Chair. As Vice Chair, W. VandeCastle had been performing the role of acting Chair. As such, an election of officers is needed to assign permanent roles. W. VandeCastle asked the Authority if an election should take place at the current meeting or the next one. S. Popp inquired what the Authority bylaws indicated. W. VandeCastle clarified that Authority bylaws stipulate that the Authority appoint a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. R. Hallet explained that the Executive Director performs the role of Secretary. As Interim Executive Director, she is therefore serving as Secretary. W. VandeCastle pointed out that normally Officer Elections are held in the spring.

S. Schmutzer pointed out that R. Hallet and W. VandeCastle were the only two authorized to sign checks. The concern is that if something were to happen to either one of them, the Authority would be left without the ability to authorize payments.

Discussion ensued regarding holding elections now versus at the next meeting, since this was S. Hansen's first meeting. B. Hansen replied that he was comfortable with holding Elections at the present meeting. S. Popp recommended holding elections at the present meeting to avert future quorum problems.

W. VandeCastle called for nominations for the position of Chair. S. Popp nominated W. VandeCastle. W. VandeCastle inquired two more times if there were any other nominations. Being none, A. LaHaie seconded the nomination for W. VandeCastle. No other nominations were offered. W. VandeCastle motioned to close the floor to Chair nominations. S. Popp seconded. Motion carried.

W. VandeCastle asked for nominations for Vice Chair. B. Goodlet nominated S. Popp. S. Popp nominated B. Goodlet. After some discussion, S. Popp rescinded her nomination for B. Goodlet. W. VandeCastle called twice more for any further nominations. W. VandeCastle made a motion to close the floor to Vice Chair nominations. A. LaHaie seconded. Motioned carried.

A. LaHaie made a motion to appoint W. VandeCastle to the position of Chair and S. Popp to the position of Vice Chair. B. Goodlet seconded. Motion carried.

W. VandeCastle stated that depending on the rules stipulated in the Authority bylaws, another election may need to be held in the spring, as this election is only to appoint interim officers until the regularly scheduled elections.

5. Approval to enter inactive tenants owing balances into State of Wisconsin Tax Refund Interception Program (TRIP) and to use Brown County Housing Authority's TRIP account to collect such interceptions.

N. Aderholdt explained that this action would only apply for the current year; next year tenants would be entered into an account specific to the Green Bay Housing Authority. The GBHA's account is not yet set up and it takes several months to set it up, thus the reason for using BCHA's account this year. W. VandeCastle stated that in his professional experience, the TRIP program is an effective tool for recovering funds owed.

R. Hallet explained that the TRIP program is utilized to recover funds which are due to the City and County Housing Authorities. The program intercepts the tax refunds of former tenants with existing balances. A. LaHaie inquired if the former tenant's entire tax refund was intercepted. N. Aderholdt clarified that the Housing Authority applies to the Department of Revenue for recovery of lost funds. The Housing Authority is then placed in a cue behind other entities to which the former tenant also owes funds. There could be any number of entities in the cue in front of the Housing Authority. The TRIP program intercepts tax refunds until all balances are paid off. As such, it may be a matter of years until the debts are paid off.

R. Hallet stated that her experience with the program through the Brown County Housing Authority is that some tenants make efforts to pay off their debts on their own after the tax interception because they don't like having their taxes intercepted. It's a method of making former tenants aware that a balance exists and that the Housing Authority has a method of collecting the funds owed.

S. Popp inquired if a debtor is placed on TRIP, is that person notified of the specific entities that are receiving portions of their tax refund? N. Aderholdt explained that it depends on when and if the debtor files taxes. When funds are intercepted, the debtor is notified by letter of the entities and the amounts. This allows debtors to establish repayment plans with the Housing Authority outside of the TRIP program. When their balance is paid off, the former tenant is removed from the TRIP program.

N. Aderholdt clarified that this year inactive GBHA tenants would be entered under the Brown County Housing Authority's TRIP account. This is due to there not being enough time to set up a GBHA TRIP account before tax season this year.

A motion was made by W. VandeCastle and seconded by S. Popp to approve the entry of inactive tenants to the TRIP program under the Brown County Housing Authority's TRIP account.

A. LaHaie stated that she did not oppose the action, but felt obligated to voice her opinion that she understood that some former renters may have difficult financial situations. N. Aderholdt explained that the program is used to recoup funds that are rightly due to the Housing Authority. Motion carried.

6. Approval to write off inactive tenant balances from GBHA's accounts.

R. Hallet stated that this was primarily an accounting measure. The balances owed by inactive tenants would still be pursued, but for accounting purposes the balances should be written off the GBHA accounting ledgers. S. Schmutzer explained that these balances also negatively impact the Housing Authority's scores. When there are too many negative balances recorded on the Housing Authority's accounts receivable, it brings down HUD scores. This could negatively impact funding. The balances will still be pursued through the TRIP program, as well as the EIV program.

S. Popp inquired if the majority of inactive tenants are from the Scattered Sites. N. Aderholdt answered that very rarely do we find that Mason Manor tenants will move out while still owing funds. In these instances several attempts are made to contact the residents, inform them of the active balances, and to set up payment plans. However, the majority of inactive tenants are from the Scattered Sites. These balances include back-rent costs and damage costs.

A motion was made by S. Popp and seconded by B. Goodlet to write off inactive tenant balances from GBHA's accounts. Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL:

None

FINANCIAL REPORT AND BILLS:

For the benefit of the new Commissioner, S. Schmutzer offered a brief overview of formats for the financial reports and bills. S. Schmutzer reported that HUD allows the GBHA to bill Mason Manor and Scattered Sites for as many units as there are for administrative services. These items are listed as Central Office Cost Center. Various other financial items were explained including revenue bonds and ongoing housing projects.

S. Popp inquired on a line item listed on the monthly bills. S. Schmutzer clarified that the indicated payment went to the Apartment Association.

A. LaHaie made a motion to accept the Financial Report and place on file.. B. Goodlet seconded. Motion passed.

W. VandeCastle made a motion to accept the Bills and place on file. S. Popp seconded. Motion carried.

STAFF REPORT:

7. Langan Investigations report for the month of December

R. Hallet explained that there was not a Langan Investigations report for the month of December at this time.

8. Occupancy Report

S. Popp inquired the status of the pest control issue. N. Aderholdt reported it is under control; units that have been treated have been cleared by Orkin, who continues to come in to monitor and treat as needed. Quarterly inspections will also be conducted and mattress covers have been ordered for tenants who would like them. N. Aderholdt stated that new residents are advised on what they should and shouldn't do in regards to the pest control issue. R. Hallet explained that a written policy hasn't yet been established and staff still needs to decide exactly what the written policy will include.

N. Aderholdt reported that there are four vacant units at Mason Manor and three at Scattered Sites, all of which will be re-rented in the next month or so. There are three upcoming vacancies at Scattered Sites and six at Mason Manor.

S. Popp inquired about the responsibility of shoveling snow and lawn care in duplexes. N. Aderholdt explained that the Housing Authority's policy has been that these are the responsibilities of the tenant who rents the lower unit. W. VandeCastle asked if these tenants receive a discounted rent rate or some other compensation for this work. N. Aderholdt explained that no additional compensation is given, but the purpose of this responsibility is to build home-ownership skills for tenants of subsidized housing. Residents of lower units who are unable or unwilling to undertake this responsibility are encouraged to speak to the residents of the upper unit. Additionally, the majority of the residents consider this a fair trade-off for receiving subsidized housing.

B. Hansen inquired if, considering the difficulty in renting out duplexes, they could be converted to four bedroom, single family homes. N. Aderholdt explained there is more of a demand for

two and three bedroom units rather than four bedrooms. Some applicants want a unit with more bedrooms than what they qualify for, but this is not permitted.

W. VandeCastle made a motion to accept the Occupancy Report and place on file. B. Hansen seconded. Motion passed.

A motion was made by A. LaHaie and seconded by S. Popp to adjourn the January 2014 GBHA meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 am.

ca; rah: jd